



CITY OF SOMERVILLE
POWDERHOUSE COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION TO
MAYOR JOSEPH A. CURTATONE

AUGUST 19th, 2013

This report is signed by the committee that participated in this process but does not necessarily serve as an endorsement of the result by each and every member of the committee. Individual comments and evaluations have been provided in the appendix.

The Purchasing Department and the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development would like to thank the participants: residents, business owners and public officials for the time, energy and expertise committed to this process.

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Recommendations of the PHCS Technical Advisory Committee

Dear Mayor Curtatone,

It has been our pleasure to participate in the process of the Powderhouse Community School (PHCS) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC has striven to carefully study the proposals with the benefit of their individual expertise. The TAC also worked to incorporate community sentiment, by applying the vision that was expressed in prior public process and incorporated in the Request for Proposal (RFP) documentation.

Many members of our committee served as a part of the focus group that was formed to discuss the future of this site. As you are aware, that focus group developed a statement summarizing the intent for any reuse and development of the school. Subsequently, the Planning Division staff created a draft zoning amendment to implement this intent. That amendment was set aside, after discussions at the focus group, as we determined it would be best to find an interested partner developer who would work to implement a program that is consistent with the intent of the proposed zoning.

It is our hope that the recommendations contained herein will help you to make the best possible decision to see the Powderhouse School and its site to a development team that can partner with the City, work with the community and create a project that will benefit the City and the neighborhood as well as the development team.

Overview

The six responses to the RFP were from:

- Davis Square Partners
- Diamond Sinacori
- Mammoth Acquisition Company
- Powderhouse Development Group
- Somerville Community Corp
- Tufts University

The TAC has met individually with each of the proposing groups for an hour long presentation and Q&A and has convened six internal meetings to discuss the technical details, veracity and merits of the proposals. The committee has used the evaluation criteria set forth in section VII of the RFP in order to score and rank the proposals.

As with any group of 15 people, there is never 100% consensus on a particular proposal. But, after completing this process, there is a remarkable level of agreement amongst the vast majority of the committee on a number of key issues. As a group, the TAC is able to recommend three of the six proposals submitted in response to the city's RFP. Davis Square Partners, Diamond Sinacori and Tufts University stood out relative to the other submissions in terms of their overall quality and their ability to meet the criteria.

Of these three, Tufts University has our highest recommendation. Tufts received the highest score from more than 80% of the committee members.

Throughout the process there has been considerable discussion about the proposed publicly accessible open space that was called for in the RFP. The RFP did not specify the future ownership of the site, but expected a site to be developed and maintained by the applicant. After completing the interviews, there were a range of opinions on the ownership and maintenance of the space. With some of the proposals, a majority of the TAC felt that the city should retain or accept back ownership of the open-space. This was particularly the case where the end-state ownership of the development would involve a private condominium association. But, even in the case of Tufts University, an organization which should have more capacity to maintain open space than we currently have in the City government, the TAC would prefer that the City retains the rights for programming and use of the land. This suggests that City ownership may make sense in cases such as these. Nonetheless, while there was not full consensus on this issue, there was an interest by the TAC in ensuring that the site include the required open space (or more than the required open space), have it be a high quality space, have it available in perpetuity, ensure that quality maintenance is performed and retain control of programming of the parcel. These objectives are worth considering when establishing an ownership and maintenance strategy for the future open space.

Preferred Proposal: Tufts University

The Tufts University proposal includes two similar use schemes for the PHCS site. The key element in both designs involves combining the PHCS and Tufts Administration Building (TAB) parcels into a larger site that faces on both Holland Street and Broadway. A consequence of this site design, and one of the key strengths of Tufts' proposal, is the unified pedestrian connection and cohesive public realm that this configuration creates. The proposal therefore provides the largest and most contiguous publicly accessible open space of any of the proposers. The proposal makes improvements to the TAB building, one of the signature buildings of the neighborhood, constructs a new administration building with underground parking where the PHCS currently stands and features a second building of either office or residential use. Most of the remaining site would be used to create an open space that would include the existing play area

on the PHCS site through some of the current TAB parking area to Holland Street.

The proposal succeeds in the key areas of the evaluation criteria:

Qualifications and References, The Tufts team has a wealth of experienced professionals. The examples of previous Tufts University developments in Somerville, Medford and Boston are numerous and accessible. The results meet the expectations of the community.

Project Narrative, The use program and site design are contextual to an urban neighborhood setting and responsive to past community process.

ENA / Purchase Price, The proposal seeks no modifications or variances. The purchase price ranks in the middle for the three viable proposals.

Financial Feasibility, Tufts University is a world class educational services organization with growing enrollment, good credit and proven financial reserves.

Municipal Benefits and Impacts, The Tufts proposal is the only one to produce significant new commercial space. This will bring jobs and daytime activity to the Teele Square area, although Tufts stated that “upon completion, the administrative portion of the project will be occupied by Tufts employees, but it is impossible to say now how many of those will be in addition to existing jobs”. The design is responsive to light, shadow, and parking concerns. Although Tufts is classified as tax-exempt, the University commits to the full real estate taxes of its proposed development. The combination of the possibility for new jobs, daytime activity created by more people working near Teele Square, and tax revenue, make this proposal appealing.

The TAC’s recommendations are based on certain understandings conveyed through the proposals and subsequent interviews of the developers. Given the complexity of tax status issues and given the emphasis on access to open space in the community process, we expect that these two concerns will be of paramount importance during any further negotiations related to this proposal.

The TAC noted the importance of the Tufts team commitment to pay full taxes on the PHCS (as stated in their response). When asked by the TAC how that would apply if the second phase were built on the TAB building site, instead of the current PHCS site, they clarified this offer by noting that they would expect to pay tax on the two new structures and the land under each of them (but not the open space), based upon prevailing assessed values and rates, in perpetuity. Tufts also commits to full public access for the open space. Tufts is open to working with the City to determine if the second building should be residential or additional Tufts offices. There was a perception amongst some members of the TAC that Tufts may have proposed a residential element because they believed

that the TAC would prefer that option. There was also a concern amongst some members of the TAC about a Tufts suggestion to modify the TAB building by cutting off a small wing visible from Holland Street. This particular idea was not well supported by the TAC. The majority of the members of the TAC prefer additional office space.

The proposal does not state a preference on ownership of the open space. Some members of the TAC recommended that the open space land is deeded over to the City of Somerville, others feel Tufts has shown competence in maintaining publicly used parks and feel they would be a good steward. While sentiments varied on ownership and maintenance, TAC members were unanimous on the idea that the City be responsible for programming the space and keeping it accessible to the public.

Should subsequent negotiations establish that these presumptions are not legitimate, we believe our recommendations should be adjusted appropriately.

Alternate Proposal #1: Davis Square Partners

This team proposes two variants for the PHCS site providing 30 and 40 residential condominium units, respectively. The new construction would consist mostly of townhouses. In the 40 unit variation, there would also be a multifamily building. This team has a track record of quality development in Somerville. Some members of the TAC expressed an expectation that the quality and accessibility of open space would have to be greater than was done at Maxwell's Green, while others noted that the context is different and therefore the Maxwell's Green open space design should not be held against the applicant. The Maxwell's Green project also establishes a track record of patiently working through community engagement in Somerville.

The TAC was satisfied with the development plan options, although the 40 unit option does exceed the number of units established in the community vision process. The team is likely to create residential condominiums. Therefore, the TAC generally thought that the City should be deeded the open space land as part of any agreement. Many TAC members felt that the development team should provide a fund for maintaining the open space.

The most significant benefit to this proposal was the use of large units with many bedrooms. This provides an opportunity for family housing, a priority that has previously been expressed in the City.

The TAC had some concerns. As drawn, the site plan appears to be including some marginal green areas as part of the publicly accessible open space (in order to reach the requested 40% of the site). The proposal does not clearly delineate what open space would be publicly accessible. Additional

configurations should be considered that would make the public open space more obviously public, and ensure that at least 40% of the lot is, indeed, high quality publicly accessible open space.

Nonetheless, should the preferred proposal not be suitable to the City, this team is a viable alternative.

Alternative Proposal #2: Diamond Sinacori

The Diamond Sinacori team proposes 35 residential condominium units be built in the area of the PHCS building while the current open area on the lot would be used as a passive park. At the interview, they described the open space as a veterans memorial park. This proposal meets the desired square footage of open space. Many of the choices for accessibility of public right-of-way and community benefit work in this proposal's favor. The residential component is of appropriate scale. The developer has a proven history of executing projects of this size with quality results.

The TAC's concerns for this project relate to details of the open space, procurement compliance issues and price. As with the Davis Square Partners team, should this team be chosen, the TAC recommends that the publicly accessible open space be deeded back to the City of Somerville to ensure it can be maintained and accessible in a manner appropriate for neighborhood use. Many TAC members feel that the developer should provide funds to the City for maintenance of the open space.

Regarding potential procurement compliance issues, Diamond Sinacori attempted to increase the value of their offer subsequent to the RFP submission deadline. The Purchasing Department, City legal counsel and the TAC agreed that this additional information should not influence the decision of the TAC. The TAC is concerned that Diamond Sinacori's cash offer was lower than other teams. Also, this offer contained limitations to their exposure should significant environmental remediation of the site be required. Our recommendation assumes they are responsible for such remediation.

Nonetheless, should these issues be addressed, and should the preferred proposal not be suitable to the City, this team is a viable alternative.

Not Recommended: Somerville Community Corporation

Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) proposes two concepts for affordable rental housing, consisting of 35 and 50 units, respectively. The team has extensive experience with community engagement and outreach. Much like the Davis Square Partners proposal, the SCC proposal has two development

scenarios, one which meets the unit counts proposed in the community process, and another that is larger.

The members of the TAC are the mindful of the need for additional affordable housing and this weighed heavily in favor of SCC's proposal. Still, SCC's proposal does not provide many of the required benefits that are available in other proposals. Some TAC members were concerned that the SCC team did not develop a site layout that would clearly make the public space look and feel open to the public. This could be addressed in a design process, but it was not addressed in the project.

Some members of the TAC were also concerned that this team was seeking city funds to build and maintain the open space. This was contrary to the requirements of the RFP. Although the TAC understands that it is difficult for an affordable housing developer to cover the costs of publicly accessible open space, the City is seeking developer partnerships to build these types of spaces. This team cannot deliver this open space on their own.

Therefore, although the TAC noted many advantages in this proposal, and see many values in developing affordable housing in appropriate circumstances in Somerville, the TAC is not recommending this proposal for this site.

Not Recommended: Powderhouse Development Group (Peter Lee and Michael McKee)

Only the Powderhouse Development Group proposes that the existing PHCS building be re-used. This proposal consists of 80 to 110 housing units with an additional 2000 square feet of retail space. The proposal includes a significant quantity of open space, and public activity uses. Many members of the TAC liked a lot about this proposal. A few recommended it as their second choice. But, in general, most TAC members were not comfortable that this team was proposing significantly more housing units than were proposed in the community vision.

Despite the Powderhouse Development Group's claims that their proposal fits within the footprint specified by the RFP and that they will provide adequate parking, the proposed 80 to 110 rental units is so far in excess of that described in the RFP that we cannot foresee a successful community engagement process. In fact, it was a similar concept, the Concord Square Planning and Development, Inc. real estate analysis of 2009, that resulted in several contentious neighborhood meetings. Given the number of units proposed, it is difficult to see how there would not be issues such as traffic and noise. Also, it is not clear they have developed any properties on this scale.

Based upon these situations, the majority of the TAC was not comfortable recommending this team.

NOT Recommended: Mammoth Acquisition Company-Coffman Realty

Mammoth Acquisition proposes a large retail pharmacy with an additional 35 rental residential units. The building would be located in the center of the site, leaving a disjointed area of the site as open space for public use. The proposal has two main benefits: it provides the highest purchase price and a reasonable tax return created by the large area of credit-tenant retail provided.

But, this team had a number of shortcomings. Most significantly, while they are very successful at building credit-tenant retail projects in suburban locations, they have limited experience with mixed use development. They have completed only one residential project, and that included only six units. Furthermore, their proposal does not describe how the walking path to Holland Street be maintained in an effective and comfortable format. The TAC is worried that such a walkway would not work across a parking lot, yet this is what is suggested by the plan. In general the proposal lacks a clear plan for creating quality open space with a pedestrian connection.

The team does not adequately establish a community engagement process. The team made no effort to establish what would be designed on the open space, and did not establish an ability to place the building on the lot in a way that would meet the community expectations about open space while also meeting the extensive siting, design and parking needs that typically come with credit-tenant retail. Therefore, the TAC is unable to recommend this proposal.

The TAC thanks you again for allowing us to provide assistance to you on this very important project.

Sincerely,

The Powderhouse School Disposition Technical Advisory Committee

George Proakis, Director of Planning
Robert Trane, Ward 7 Alderman
Jack Connolly, Alderman at Large
Dennis Sullivan, Alderman at Large
Mary Jo Rossetti, School Committee
Stephen Houdlette, Economic Development Planner
Louisa Oliveira, Planner, Parks & Open Space
Sean Becker
Conor Brennan
Frances Fisher
Brian Harris

James Monagle
Michael Panis
Alex Pitkin
Richard Shortt

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A. QUICK SHEET

Quick Sheet

<u>Davis Square Architects</u> Program: 35-50 Condos, Retail Open Space: Need funding Price: \$1.8 M Timeline: unknown Project History: Residential, St. Polycarp Village, Somerville Residential, Temple Street, Somerville Residential, 75 Cross Street, Somerville	<u>Davis Square Partners</u> Program: 30-40 Condos Open Space: Price: \$3.5 M Timeline: unknown Project History: Residential, Maxwell Green, Somerville Residential, Olmsted Green, Mattapan Residential, Auburn Court, Cambridge
<u>Diamond Sinacori</u> Program: 35 Condos Open Space: Price: \$1.0 M Timeline: 28 months Project History: Re-use, Kendall Crescent, Brookline, MA Re-use, Stoneleigh, Dedham, MA Re-use, The Waterworks, Chestnut Hill, MA	<u>Mammoth Acquisitions</u> Program: 35 Condos, CVS Open Space: unknown Price: \$7 M Timeline: 27 months Project History: CVS, Brockton, MA Commercial Center, Pembroke, MA Public Re-use, Westwood, MA
<u>Powderhouse Dev. Group</u> Program: 110 Condos Open Space: Price: \$4.2 M Timeline: 32 months Project History: Hotel, Porter Hotel, Cambridge, MA Park, Dickerman Park, Somerville, MA Re-use, Liberty Hotel, Boston, MA	<u>Tufts University</u> Program: Office, Residential Open Space: Joins TAB site Price: \$2.7 M Timeline: 27 months Project History: Institutional Re-use, Medford, MA Medical/Lab Expansion, Tufts Dental Boston, MA Mixed Use, Dowling Hall, Medford, MA

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA TOTAL SCORES

TAC Member #	Development Proposal	Average Score
All	Diamond Sinacori	74
All	Davis Square Partners	79
All	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	43
All	Powderhouse Development Group	72
All	Somerville Community Corp.	69
All	Tufts University	88

TAC Member #	Development Proposal	Individual Scores
1	Davis Square Partners	67
1	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	
1	Powderhouse Development Group	
1	Somerville Community Corp.	61
1	Tufts University	88
2	Diamond Sinacori	70
2	Davis Square Partners	80
2	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	33
2	Powderhouse Development Group	77
2	Somerville Community Corp.	64
2	Tufts University	93
3	Diamond Sinacori	64
3	Davis Square Partners	63
3	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	60
3	Powderhouse Development Group	59
3	Somerville Community Corp.	60
3	Tufts University	94
4	Diamond Sinacori	89
4	Davis Square Partners	89
4	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	66
4	Powderhouse Development Group	84
4	Somerville Community Corp.	82
4	Tufts University	94
5	Diamond Sinacori	62
5	Davis Square Partners	77
5	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	29
5	Powderhouse Development Group	63
5	Somerville Community Corp.	55
5	Tufts University	74
6	Diamond Sinacori	76
6	Davis Square Partners	82
6	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	56
6	Powderhouse Development Group	75
6	Somerville Community Corp.	78
6	Tufts University	92
7	Diamond Sinacori	91
7	Davis Square Partners	93
7	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	45
7	Powderhouse Development Group	77
7	Somerville Community Corp.	73
7	Tufts University	97
8	Diamond Sinacori	92
8	Davis Square Partners	94
8	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	49
8	Powderhouse Development Group	94
8	Somerville Community Corp.	85

8	Tufts University	61
9	Diamond Sinacori	88
9	Davis Square Partners	90
9	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	27
9	Powderhouse Development Group	79
9	Somerville Community Corp.	85
9	Tufts University	98
11	Diamond Sinacori	73
11	Davis Square Partners	75
11	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	26
11	Powderhouse Development Group	46
11	Somerville Community Corp.	67
11	Tufts University	78
12	Diamond Sinacori	54
12	Davis Square Partners	73
12	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	26
12	Powderhouse Development Group	52
12	Somerville Community Corp.	61
12	Tufts University	97
14	Diamond Sinacori	71
14	Davis Square Partners	68
14	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	39
14	Powderhouse Development Group	91
14	Somerville Community Corp.	66
14	Tufts University	91
15	Diamond Sinacori	72
15	Davis Square Partners	71
15	Mammoth Acquisition Co.	59
15	Powderhouse Development Group	63
15	Somerville Community Corp.	66
15	Tufts University	88

C. TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

TAC Member #1

A few final thoughts as requested on the Powderhouse school re-development team selection:

Returning to the public process begun over two years ago the following items remain critical to the selection committee:

Property use:

- Publicly accessible open space is the primary and preferred element of consideration: Removing space from the public and City's control must return more than just short term private benefit to the purchaser/developer. Loss of public open space is a qualitative issue for not just the immediate neighborhood but also the city in general – no matter how currently degraded the space may be.
- In the visioning sessions housing became an acceptable use – but was not the most highly desired outcome
- Limiting the number of housing units on the site was important and defined by the RFP
- Retail is not considered a viable use for this site
- The public pathway thru the TAB and Powderhouse sites as an easement is critical and will require careful consideration in the final plan.

Housing:

- None of the housing proposals presented adequately “fit” into the neighborhood as proposed:
 - The neighborhood is deemed to have a higher quantity of affordable housing than other Wards.
 - The attached housing models presented do not work well on such a small parcel of land.
 - The housing proposals create awkward public/private issues for the public open space.
- Preference for owner/family occupied, larger units may ultimately not be economically viable given the market conditions and the recent spike in housing costs.
- The reuse of the PHCS structure is highly unlikely for housing. Infeasible to create parking below the existing structure.

Retail:

- The single proposal for use as “little box” retail should be considered a non-starter.

- Retail as part of a mixed use development is in and of itself a worthy consideration – but the site's location between Teele and Davis Squares makes for an awkward retail environment – pulling from those dense developments versus adding to them.

The architecture of the TAB building should be the dominant physical and aesthetic element to respond to with this design/development proposal (Tufts has invested in this “historic” structure and it is a quality landmark building in the neighborhood) – not the wood frame triple-deckers and single family houses immediately adjacent – especially when trying to make a convincing pedestrian link between Broadway and Holland.

None of the teams (except Tufts) seemed to understand the three dimensional and visual issues of the site – the retaining walls and what happens to the back of the TAB building when the school is demolished – it is a large physical volume that will need repair work and will create a very strong edge to the north – a three story building element that will block a lot of sunlight into any open space shown in that area – not a logical place to put a “park”.

Housing on this site will be the least beneficial long term use as shown by the current proposals (but the easiest for the neighborhood to be seduced by) – the public/private/semi-private confusion created adjacent to the mandated open space will require more creativity than shown.

The existing housing patterns of two and three story (but separated) single and multi-family houses can't be repeated for the development costs – a proposal extending the masonry architecture of the TAB building as a rental style apartment building (four stories minimum) and concentrating the investment into high quality facades may have been an interesting concept – but was not explored.

Tufts University Administrative offices The idea of a linear park between Holland and Broadway is the singular best outcome presented by the development teams and the Tuft's proposal is really the only team capable of giving the neighborhood the greatest long term value on open space and pedestrian link as envisioned by the steering group meetings. Expanding the open space component makes a comfortable and usable environment for all citizens – with the potential for a fair amount of active use space to compliment the nearby grass ball field at Hodgkins Park (a space is really more of a passive/park-like space despite its ball field and need not be replicated).

Somerville would be wise to support the physical and visual shift of Tuft's center of gravity towards Somerville down Packard Avenue as best we can – the ability to “extend” the TAB building with a zero lot addition can save even more space (they are the only team capable of achieving that) and an institutional, high

quality office building will serve the neighborhood far better than housing. Preferably with parking below grade.

Issue for negotiation and refinement with the Tuft's proposal:

- Maximize long term cost benefits to the city – but work towards an equitable arrangement that benefits all partners
- Seek City ownership or development restrictions on the final open space plan
- Mandate most, if not all, parking be below grade and study parking viability for evening use to benefit Teele Sq. businesses
- Maximize business uses and potential long term tax earnings for the city at this site – or seek to consolidate city's rental space between the TAB building and future structure to benefit of both parties.
- Demolition of part of TAB building is inadvisable
- Seek additional TAB building improvements to benefit the neighborhood:
 - Relocate the small bus parking currently so visible on Holland Street
 - Replace the Holland Street entrance canopy with an aesthetically appropriate structure
 - Correct driveway alignments depending upon final design and traffic considerations

The City can even go farther with this team by combining the Traffic and Safety parcel with the TAB and Powderhouse parcels for a seamless, block long streetscape (the corner of Paulina and Holland could be developed as housing to improve that corner visually – if housing is still a desired outcome).

There are numerous conversations nationally surrounding “town and gown” relationships, and the emerging model of cooperation and partnering in development to the long term benefit of all parties is an important opportunity for the City of Somerville to engage in with Tufts. The Powderhouse proposal ultimately must stand on its own merits for both parties but it can also be an opportunity to engage in conversations regarding the entire campus perimeter with the city. Job creation, public access and services, student housing on and off campus, and perhaps leveraging parcels like the PHCS for “institutional” buildings and uses to allow for the resale of smaller wood frame houses back to the public as their intended use as housing stock – speak to the benefit of a cooperative masterplanning effort that the City's Planning Department and the University might engage in, rather than isolated and re-active processes that are perceived to have failed in the past.

Diamond Sinacori
Veterans Park

Although the design team talked about the design being sympathetic to the scale and architectural characteristics of the neighborhood – in fact there are no

connected town house units in the vicinity, the massing in fact does not relate to the multi-family housing types along that section of Broadway.

There is no precedent for having housing that “pretends” to have a front door directly on the park – but no real entrances! Housing on this site should have street frontage to keep with the character of the neighborhood. In reality the park facade becomes the back of the units, I believe this will be a very negative atmosphere for the homeowners and the park users as well. The designer mentioned all owners will arrive through the underground parking – this is a very unusual strategy for the neighborhood. That said – underground parking is this housing option’s strongest benefit simply because it preserves the largest quantity of green space.

The second open space is described as “public open space” this is simply not a viable description- it is hidden and very private to the housing development – not necessarily a bad thing – but call it what it is.

Not sure where the concept for a Veteran’s park fits in with the development, a passive park is asking the neighborhood and the City to give up precious active open space – although it is overgrown with weeds this space does get active use and the demographic of children and young adults who will use the space ebbs and flows over time and parks are more than just play structures for the youngest children and grass fields – hardscape play areas (not streets) are critical as well. There is a veteran’s memorial a short distance away on Broadway that could more easily be expanded for recent war veterans – it is currently the terminus for the Memorial Day parade each year and could use the additional “support” described in the interview.

35 high-end condo units is a lot for this neighborhood/site and it is unclear how this is a long term benefit to the city, few families will be able to afford these units – it would be better to simply create a beautiful apartment tower – with architectural character and larger family sized units that is in keeping with the TAB building that gains more open space.

The community room space is a toss off and not necessary given the availability of space in the TAB building for community use.

The City should maintain and control the open space in any housing scenarios – it is too important to the neighborhood and the concerns of the steering committee. Condo fees would not be a long term viable financial mechanism for maintaining the open space.

Mammoth

Retail development

No chemistry or knowledge of the neighborhood exhibited by this team. A very poor quality graphic presentation that spoke volumes to the quality of the work by this team.

Simply an outdated approach to urban space planning.

Retail is a poor choice. Loading and service concerns not adequately addressed.

Spoke of housing over retail but clearly didn't develop the plan in that manner. Strange disconnect.

It would have been interesting if they had brought some original thinking to the table – because they are the only commercial development.

Somerville Community Corporation

Affordable Housing

The presentation wasn't very convincing and the team was quite disorganized – no real insight into the site and neighborhood – simply looking to “land” affordable housing on any available parcel.

Didn't find the public/community input process to be convincing – although they are certainly capable and known entity. Do you really need to crowdsource for a local project of this scope?

Felt that this team spoke mostly of their prior experience and less about the true opportunities for the site. Poor site plan organization. Many of the same public/private space issues to resolve.

Mentioned 7 Cameron (Cambridge) as a comparable semi-public and accessible park – I think this is a concern for all of the housing proposals – these spaces will not be comfortable for the owners/inhabitants or the park users – and the public will not find their way back into “hidden” pocket parks.

Recommends deeding the park back to the City (I agree – unless an offerer is truly capable of making the space work, can accept the liability of the public access, etc.).

The housing as shown was quite “down market” (rental units), I support affordable housing initiatives, but believe they need to fit into a neighborhood.

Does the daycare work as a business proposition? Conflict with Tufts' daycare next door, Bright Horizons, etc. right nearby in Davis Sq.?

Spoke to improving the water quality off site – not sure this project should bear that burden – improving the water quality on site and limiting drainage to offsite is certainly a priority

TAC Member #2

Tufts

- Require the LDA to state that Tufts will be required to pay full commercial taxes and associated Community Preservation Act charges on any new construction
- Preference for the proposal that includes all office, although open to removing the TAB building wing or moving of the buildings more similar to the Office and Residential Scheme.
- Both schemes includes more parking than required. Reduce parking to the amount required through reducing surface parking.
- Ask Tufts to explore a design that has the underground parking entrance closer to where the TAB building and the new administration building would meet, reducing the length of the driveway against the houses along Paulina and allowing more space for a buffer.
- Ask for the open space to remain owned by the City.
- I don't think it's fair to ask Tufts to make improvements or changes to other properties they own in the area as part as this process, in the same way we would not be asking Diamond or Davis Square Partners to do the same.
- Confirm that the deed restriction requiring the basketball court to remain can be lifted.
- Show where the current fenced play area for the day care will be moved to. Since this would likely not be publically accessible open space it should not be included in the count of total open space.

Diamond Sinacori

- While I understand the desire to recognize veterans I find that many locations that serve as memorials are not usable. A good example is the memorial park behind the Stop & Shop at Route 16 and Broadway. This is a beautiful space that is largely unused. The priority should be on making a usable park, not a monument or similar edifice that may reduce the usability of the park.
- Their proposed purchase price allows reduction based on site remediation findings. If possible don't allow this.
- Ask for the open space to remain owned by the City.

Davis Square Partners

- Their proposals do not indicate how much open space they have created in terms of number of acres, percentage of the lot, etc. It appears that they may be

counting courtyard space or other cut-up space as "publicly accessible". Have the LDA or some other document confirm that they will create at least the minimum requested, contiguous, publicly accessible open space.

-Ask for the open space to remain owned by the City.

Overall

-My First Choice is Tufts.

-Given the City of Somerville does not allow parking within an intersection explore whether the Broadway sidewalk can have a bumpout along the entire length of the Packard Avenue signalized intersection, which would allow a combination of a wider sidewalk, narrower intersection and more greenspace.

Perhaps the LDA can allow or encourage this.

-Any traffic impact study should look at the intersection of Cameron Avenue and Holland.

-Any traffic impact study should consider moving the midblock signal on Holland between Paulina and Simpson to either the intersection of Paulina or the intersection of Simpson

TAC Member #3

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #4

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #5

I hope that many of the concerns of the community/committee can get incorporated into negotiations with the selected development team, particularly if we can be explicit about them in our recommendations.

I just wanted to reiterate that one particularly attractive component of the Davis Square Partners team for me is their focus on larger multi-bedroom housing, which I think there is a great demand for in Somerville and will allow the city to maintain it's diversity. I recognize that in supporting the potentially large units (at least more bedrooms) of the Davis Square Partners proposal, one may give up a little more green space than with some of the other development proposals and I personally am ok with that. I know some committee members had concerns about their design and the open space that it provided for the community, which leads me to a couple of thoughts on open space that would be great to recommend/get incorporated into the negotiations:

I'm on the fence as to whether I think it's advantageous for the city to own the open space vs. Tufts if that developer is chosen. If any other developer is chosen, I think it's important to have the open space operated by the city.

I don't know if there's a way to do this and still request that the developer provide maintenance funds; that would be great, since the development will definitely benefit from it, but possibly not feasible and could see this as something that the city could compromise on. I am concerned though about the level of effort/\$\$ that the developer would spend on this space if it's not under their control. Is there a way to have them guarantee at least \$X value of improvements to the open space? It would be sad if we ended up with a path, grass and a few trees.

The other piece that concerns me about all of the residential focused plans is how much of the open space would really be publicly available. I recognize that a residential development benefits from having some personal green space. None of the plans made it particularly clear how much would be "private" green space vs. public and which components added up to the 40% open space. This should be part of the negotiations.

I was also thinking that it would be useful to list the key features that we did like about the proposals. I heard a lot that it would be nice to take this feature from this proposal and that feature from another. No reason we can't get those preferences written down.

TAC Member #6

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #7

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #8

TAC Member Jim Monagle submitted the following comment. He requested that the Committee identify him as the author of these comments:

Tufts Project Concerns For Write-up

- Focus on Tax:
 - o Affirmed legally that Tufts will always pay taxes on Property and Buildings based on current assessments. This also means that any increase in assessment will result in increase in taxes (similar to any other property owner in the city).
 - o Tufts was the only bid that said they would not pay a tax on the green space. What does this mean? If this was to occur, I would expect a significant impact on financial benefits of their bid
-

- o If Tufts were to build on their other lot (The one containing the TAB building), how would this impact the taxes to be paid in their bid? Would this new building on this lot result in increased taxes.
- o How would the combining of lots (TAB and Powderhouse) change the factors affecting their bid in relation to other bids?
- o If the Tufts Proposal moves forward, the city should immediately discuss the sale as part of a PILOT agreement that takes into consideration the issues arise with a sale to Tufts

Opposing Opinion

In the reuse of the Powerhouse School site, the development of the site has come down to a bid by Tufts that will result in expansion of the campus in our neighborhood or bids that will provide for more residential options that could target empty nesters and/or young families. In addition, a Tufts sale would mean that this property would never be in play again in the private sector.

The RFP suggests that the project should provide “community benefits to residents and fiscal returns for the city”. The RFP goes on to say that in relation to the green space requirement, the “applicant must seek out a strategy to deliver and preferably maintain this quality space as a significant community benefit of the project”.

In terms of the Tufts Proposal

- Does the Committee’s opinion represent the neighborhood’s opinion? In the first two meetings held, the attendees spoke overwhelmingly that Tufts should not be a buyer of the property. People were told at that time, that Tufts was not interested in the property and it was then that the attendees moved on to factors that were to be considered in the sale.
- Tufts’ Proposal was not the highest bid on the property. A competing finalist had a bid that was \$850,000 higher.
- City’s staff evaluation of the data presented showed a more positive “net fiscal impact” by proposals from two other finalists than the Tufts proposal.
- Tufts was the only proposal that suggested that the green space be removed from a taxable assessment.
- Will Tufts always pay taxes on the property, buildings, and its improvements?
- If Tufts combines the Powderhouse parcel with the TAB parcel and then does new construction on the TAB parcel, will Tufts pay taxes on the new development on the TAB parcel?
- Tufts primary focus for the Powderhouse parcel is to place an office building(s) on the site. They spoke to the need to transfer offices for their schools on campus to space in the new building(s). Some committee members believed that this may result in new workers being hired, but this was not addressed in the bid.
- Any sale to Tufts must look at the sale not from a single parcel view, but in light of a “Tufts Master Plan” in order to properly assess its possible benefits. For example the freeing of space on campus by transferring offices into a new building on the Powderhouse site may allow Tufts to add to their student body.

Since they cannot house their student body on campus, this will result in more neighborhood housing being occupied by undergraduate students. This could result in young families and elderly having more difficulty in competing for available housing in West Somerville.

- Has Tufts worked with the community? Tufts has presented a “Master Plan” in the past that has the University expanding its campus into the surrounding neighborhood. It appears that the primary focus is on expanding the campus between Curtis Street and Packard Avenue from the top of their campus to Powderhouse Boulevard. Their last 10 purchases of neighborhood housing have taken place in this area. Of the approximately 68 homes they own in Somerville, 30 are tax exempt. With this amount of homes in tax exempt status, the city loses significant tax revenue based on the assessments of homes in West Somerville.
- With Tufts not being able to house their students on campus all four years, and having increased their undergraduate student body to over 5000 students (this is up from the little over 4000 figure when last confronted on this issue) based on their Blue Book figures, a significant amount of their students seek housing off campus that impacts negatively on families and elderly seeking housing in the area.
- Tufts will have no restrictions on the use of the adjoining TAB building site in January, 2017, based on a 30 year agreement signed with the city on January 29, 1987. How will this impact the neighborhood?

Other Bids for the Powderhouse Site

- The Davis Square Partners proposal offers the opportunity for young families and empty nesters to be able to make a home purchase in West Somerville. Their development of housing would be the largest development in this area in years. It would address a need cited in the city’s vision plan.
- The Davis Square Partners proposal placed a higher bid than Tufts on the property by \$850,000
- The Davis Square Partners proposal based on assessment by city staff, would have a higher positive “net fiscal impact” than the Tufts Proposal.
- Davis Square Partners have a track record of working with the city and its residents based on their recent development of Maxwell’s Green. They appeared to address the priorities of neighbors.
- The design of the buildings in the Davis Square Partners proposal appeared to be a better match to the surrounding neighborhood than that of an institutional office building.
- The initial design of the green space for the Davis Square Partners proposal included more possible uses for neighbors than the Tufts Proposal’s passive green space and there was no mention by the Davis Square Partners of eliminating this green space from the tax assessment as opposed to the Tufts proposal.

As the RFP suggests, the Davis Square Partners proposal would provide “community benefits to residents and fiscal returns for the city”.

TAC Member #9

In reviewing the PHS proposals I tried to focus on open space and which of the designs would give the most benefit to the most users. Of course everyone seemed very flexible in their designs and these are only conceptual, but that's what we have to go on. Although they would all be publicly accessible, these are my thoughts and gut reactions:

1. Tufts

The design of this project is the most beneficial in terms of public space. Because they already own the other parcel, there is much more flexibility and they can put the admin uses on one side of the site and housing on the other and allow the open space to be a connector and a truly public park from Holland to Broadway. Additionally, they were open to:

1. Maintaining the park
2. Mitigating the streetscape in front of the TAB
3. Making it public space in perpetuity
4. Considering public housing as the housing option

If they did all these, they move toward three goals in the comp plan: open space, housing and jobs (bc ppl work there)

2. Davis Square Partners

The open space maintenance depends on condo owners. I am not convinced that the space is truly open. The configuration is a courtyard to the housing units.

3. Diamond Sinacori

The sentiment to have a memorial vets park is sincere, (incidentally, almost all our parks and squares are named after vets.) It does provide max open space (if parking blow) but is very low density housing.

4. SCC, had largely undeveloped landscape designs. In the configuration they showed, again, the space becomes a courtyard, which does not read as truly open space/ publicly inviting.

5. Powderhouse development

Great bc they reuse the building, but the civic space is out of place here. A civic space vs a public park? Though I applaud the green elements, the design they showed was very "corporate" and did not feel to me like it belongs in this neighborhood.

6. Mammoth

The public space is behind the parking lot. This is bad design, even in a suburban context.

TAC Member #10

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #11

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #12

Tufts University- My recommendations are very high for the Tufts RFP. This is qualified by the need to tie down agreements in writing so that there is no backing off of such agreements. I recommend that we approve working with Tufts for the ownership and development of this property.

Tufts shall pay taxes on all new improvements on both properties as of the date of property transfer without any time restriction. Tufts will take responsibility for maintenance of open space, and add approximately 2 acres of park open space on the two adjacent properties and put significant parking underground. Tufts will put a minimum of \$2MM in a trust account for park maintenance, at minimum all maintenance will come from fund earnings.

Tufts will take responsibility for policing both park and all property and shall provide their own trash collection. The net revenue to the city is good when maintenance of the expanded public area is considered and police services, plowing, etc. are provided by Tufts itself.

I would recommend that Tufts provide parking in the evenings to the benefit of Teele Square businesses, and if fees are charged, provide a share of such fees to the City of Somerville.

The purchase price is strong with the development of a park of comparable quality to open space on the main Tufts campus and the creation of a trust fund to maintain 2 acres of public park, removal of most parking between Broadway and Holland and little or no cost to the city for park maintenance.

Preservation of open space is the number one issue for residents expressed in focus groups. Tufts is providing so much more than expected with the joining of the TAB and Powderhouse properties and a total of 2 acres of park.

Office space in new buildings will be most compatible with a park where little conflict should occur over the use of public space. Offices will be used for higher paying jobs than retail and the potential for growth in office and research jobs is beneficial to the city. In addition Tufts moves more toward Somerville as its institutional home. Somerville becomes the home of Tufts University!

Tufts has all financing in hand to proceed with the project and all the incentives to use high quality materials and do a quality job.

Tufts did substantial outreach with community residents in its most recent projects in Medford.

Tufts says it is now committed to payment in-lieu of taxes on all new off campus projects.

Davis Square Partners, LLC-While Davis Square partnership has a positive track record in developing Maxwell Green, I see minimal effort in the development of open space and their and lack of creativity in making Maxwell Green an inviting community especially in the winter. The buildings are too drab.

The open space plan while providing for public uses, does not create spaces that all can use. The park will be subject to the control of the condo association which may have limited resources or commitment to maintain the park. A \$3.5MM purchase price does not provide funding for maintenance or park construction.

The income to the city varies based on the two plans presented with condos and condo/rental mix providing different levels of income. The current financing and market favors rentals, which may be all that a bank will finance. The financing for the project is hardly settled.

Davis Square Partners should be considered if Tufts does not get selected or is unable to move forward, with more definition of details on park and building designs and amenities. The net revenue appears as positive.

Somerville Community Corporation- SCC intends to build all affordable housing on this site. Mixed use seems more appropriate with even as high as 50% affordable. The funding environment for affordable housing is not transparent, at present, with issues of the federal sequester and decline in funding for affordable housing. SCC seems stretched to undertake this project where 50 units would be more viable as suggested in their RFP. Funds are lacking for the completion of a park and there is still dependency on the city to make this possible. Not only are funds sought for the park, but \$1MM is requested for the city to be allocated to enable this project.

Since there are other parties more capable of undertaking this project, I would suggest that city funds be used as an incentive for affordable housing projects where private developers have no interest in the property.

The group has a good track record working with the community on St Polycarps, but the Union Square project raises questions as to having done enough work with the community in advance of announcing the project.

The suggested purchase price is on the low side. Net revenue is negative.

I do not recommend this project.

Diamond Sinacori-The developer has good experience with developing housing in urban areas including new projects and rehabs. The group has not shown any experience working with community groups, but a good track record on approvals.

The purchase price is extremely low and with many contingencies. Funding for the park development, maintenance as well as ownership are unclear.

I do not recommend this project.

Powderhouse Development Group LLC-The project is outside guidelines for number of units at 110, versus 40 maximum on this project. The bulky existing building is bulked out even more to make space for this number of units. The project assumes a zoning change consistent with that on adjacent Holland properties, but not considered for this project.

The purchase price is not as strong as first presented as much in-kind is valued into the price. There arts component of the project has no identified arts group to operate it.

The community path between Broadway and Holland requires that one, avoid falling into the amphitheater.

The parking needed for the project will result in excessive traffic and there is no consideration of bike or car sharing.

The structural report on the building in no way gives confidence that enough work has been done to show physical or financial viability in retrofitting.

I do not recommend this project. Net revenue is negative.

Mammoth Acquisition Company –While the purchase price on this project is strong, it requires a use that is inappropriate for the neighborhood to support such a price. The developer claims interest from a large drug store chain, yet the area is oversaturated with chain drugstores and it is not an appropriate use in a residential neighborhood.

The plan for public space is poor as it is not clustered. Amenities are not defined. The path is not shown on the plot plan. Housing would sit above the retail with extensive hardtop surrounding the buildings to provide resident and retail parking. There are no plans for bike share or car share and the extensive traffic flow on Broadway into the property is not appropriate for the neighborhood.

I do not recommend this project. In addition net revenue is negative.

TAC Member #13

Provided no specific comments

TAC Member #14

In evaluating the six proposals submitted I focused on the grading criteria, the community process' repeated interest in open space and connectedness through to Holland Street and the importance of a viable developer who can "get it done".

The scoring system led me to break out the bids into three distinct groupings based on the clustering of their scores: Large structures on the current footprint, the housing developers and the pharmacy option. My top three selections are as follows: Tufts, Powder House Development Group and Davis Square Partners.

My top two choices are evenly matched: the Tufts University proposal to combine the site with the Tufts Administration Building (TAB) and the Powder House Development Group (PHDG) proposal to reuse the existing building and put in a dense condo facility with artists lofts and some public amenities. Both proposals incorporate substantial contiguous open space and underground parking. Tufts however has the added advantage of consolidating existing surface parking from the TAB site and placing it underground. PHDG's reuse of the current structure was a strong positive from my perspective but has drawn question from other panel members as has their high number of small units. Both development teams seem highly capable of constructing their visions for the parcel.

Tufts' proposal has the critical component of a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT). The durability and definition of that PILOT structure that is a major concern. This can be addressed because of the nature of the sale of property from the city to the university will be bound by a contract which can lock the PILOT in for perpetuity. However the devil is in the details and we, the committee, have not seen adequate definition of how the City's Legal Department would structure such a deal.

In all proposals the final ownership, maintenance and accessibility of the green/open space is somewhat undefined. However as the Tufts proposal consolidates two properties it is especially important to codify the public

easement through the parcel from Broadway to Holland so that no future development cuts off this pedestrian avenue.

The housing developers scored fairly consistently as a grouping. Differences in ownership structure, contiguity of the green space proposed, sub-surface parking and the team of developers led me to single out the Diamond Sinacori proposal as a solid option except for having the lowest purchase price and exceptions to the LDA. Next up was Davis Square Partners whose experience at Maxwell's Green is indicative of a team that can get things done and work within the Somerville community that is also experienced with tricky demolition issues. My main concern with their proposal is the nature of the green space and whether it would maintain the connection between Broadway and Holland street for pedestrian traffic. The "green" from Maxwell's transplanted to the PHCS site would not be sufficient but they appear open to community input. I would also like to see them place more of the parking underground as was partially done in their second option. I would find either developer acceptable but give Davis Square the edge from purchase price considerations.

Somerville Community Corporation's (SCC) had an interesting proposal but losing their lead developer, their reliance on city funding and the fragmented conception of the green space with the prevalence of surface parking moved them to last in this group from my perspective.

The pharmacy proposal from Mammoth Acquisition was the furthest from the community vision of any of the packages I reviewed. It seemed non-responsive to the expressed need for openness and connection and the least capable of successfully accomplishing such a complex urban infill.

TAC Member #15

Provided no specific comments

D. SITE PLAN VISUALS

Diamond Sinacori

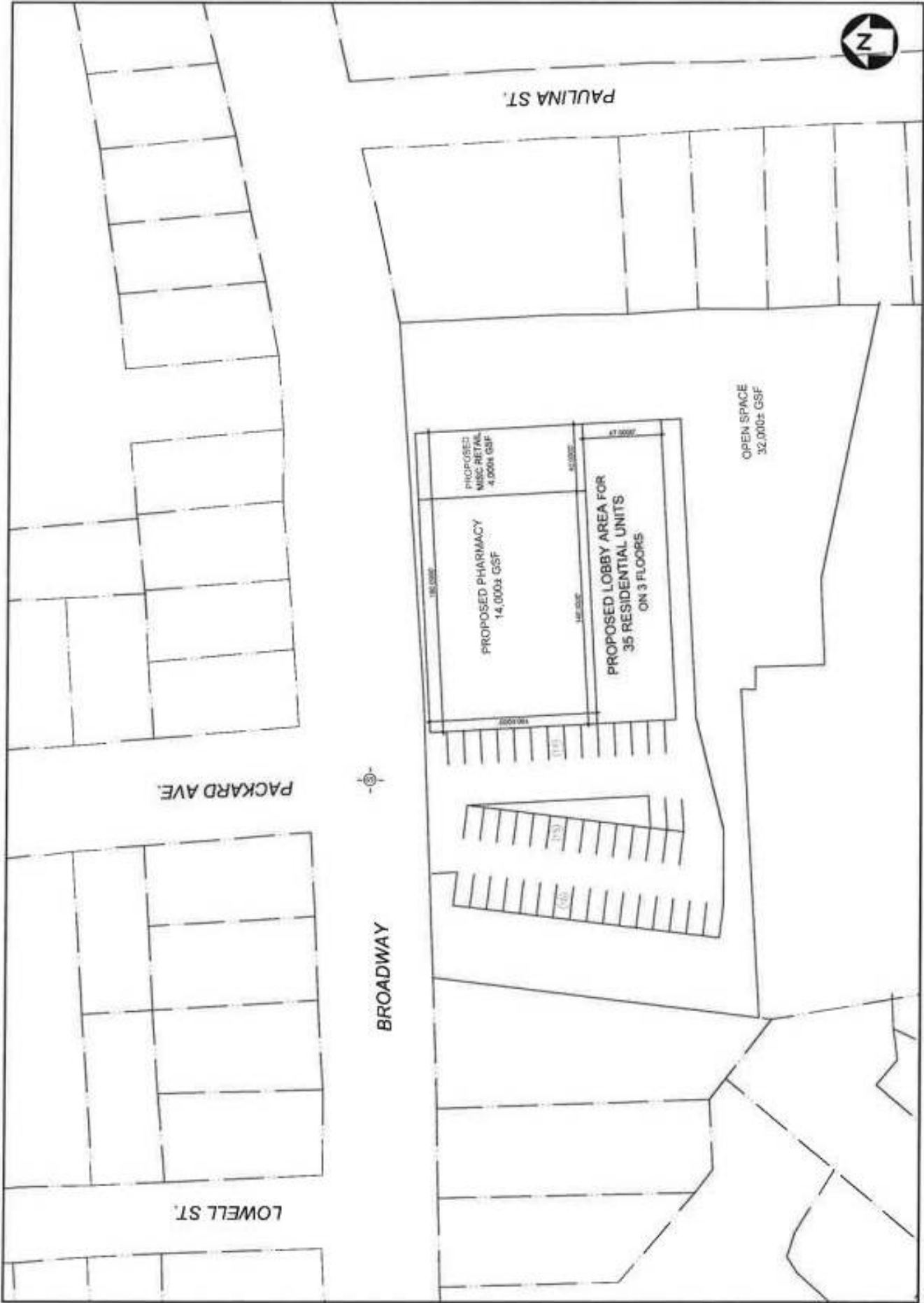


Scheme A | “The Hamlet”

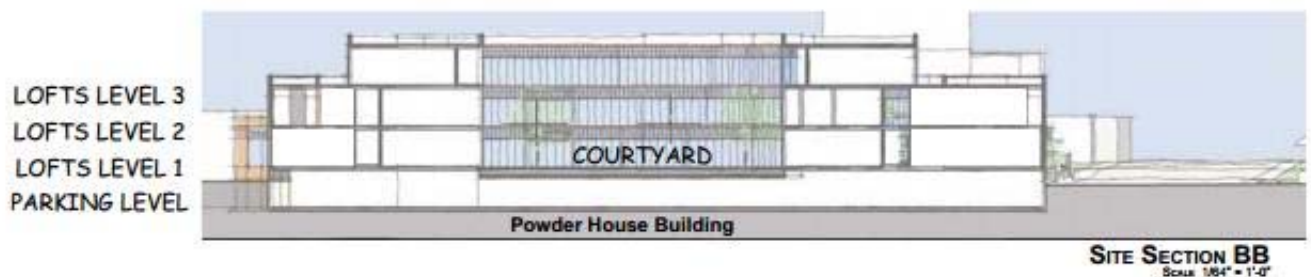
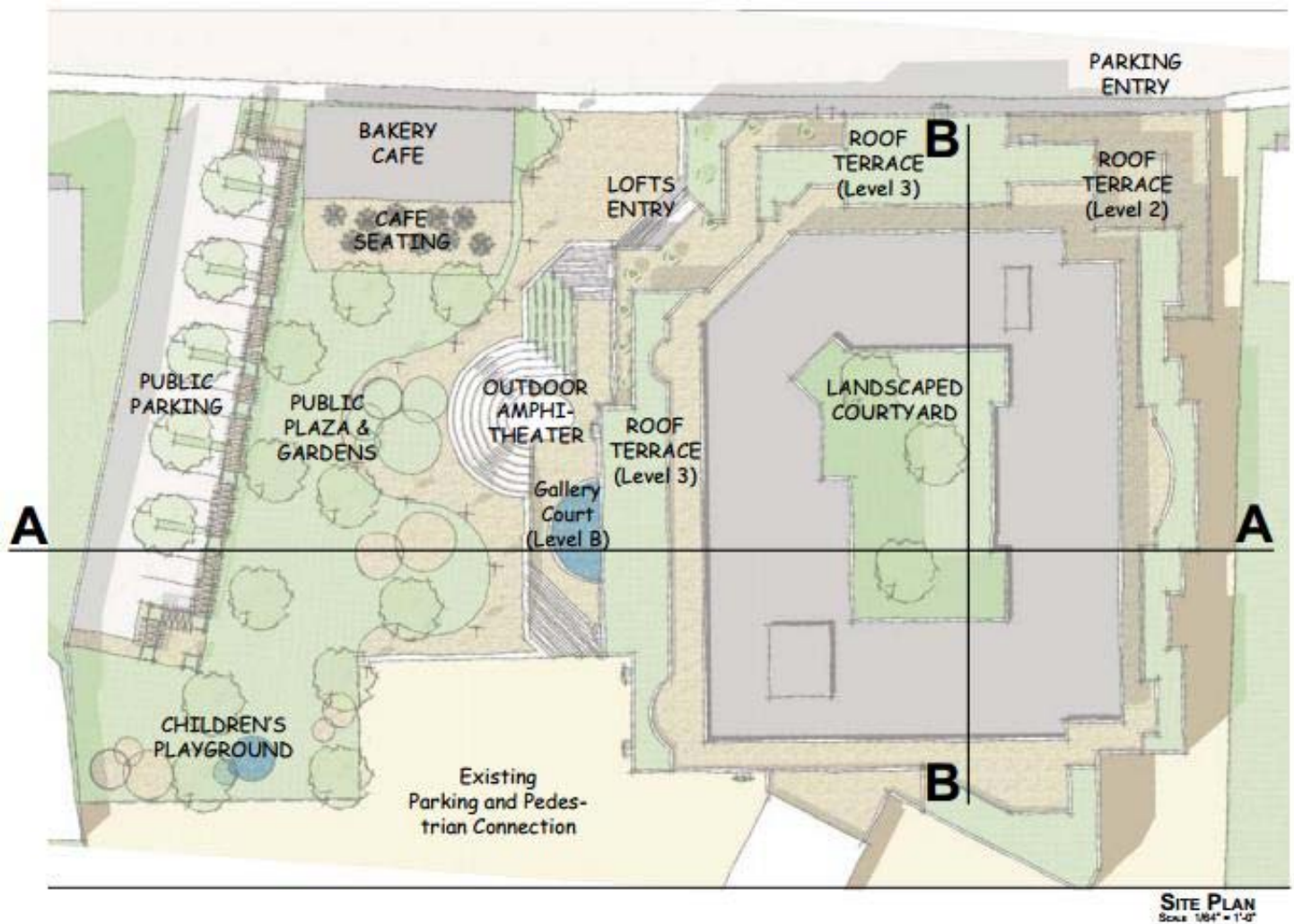


Scheme B | "The Square"





Powderhouse Development Group



POWDER HOUSE COMMUNITY SCHOOL SOMERVILLE, MA

BUILDING A	1500 GSF X 3 STORIES = 4500 SF
BUILDING B	3300 GSF X 3 STORIES = 9900 SF
BUILDING C	3300 GSF X 3 STORIES = 9900 SF
BUILDING D	5710 GSF X 3 STORIES = 17130 SF
BUILDING E	3300 GSF X 3 STORIES = 9900 SF
TOTAL USES	35 APARTMENTS 15,000 SF COMMERCIAL 5,000 SF PRESCHOOL
PARKING	37 PARKING SPACES
OPEN SPACE	MIN. 0.75 ACRES



POWDER HOUSE COMMUNITY SCHOOL SOMERVILLE, MA



Tufts University (A)

Scheme I - Residential + Office

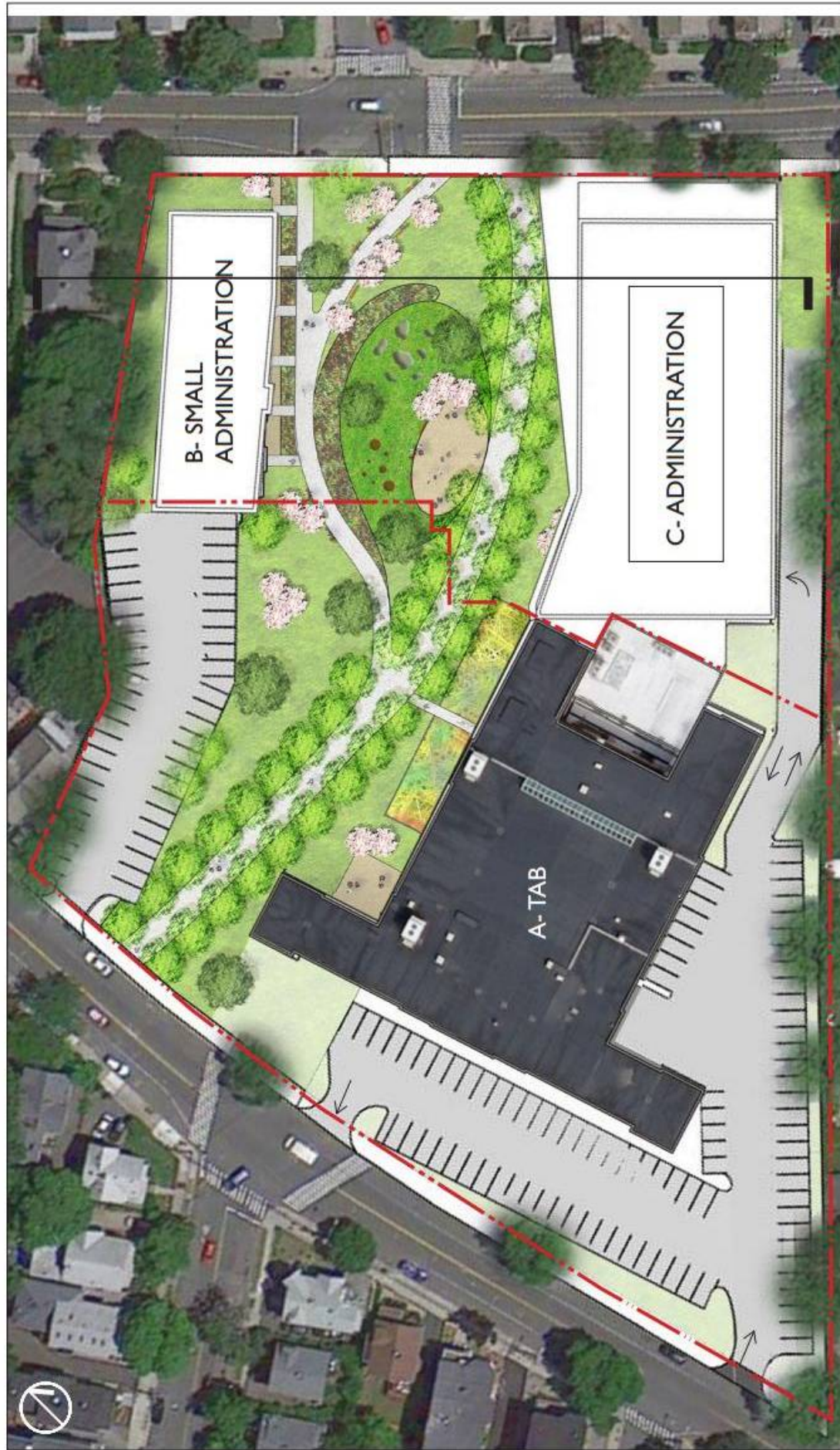
Site Plan I - Residential + Office



Tufts University (B)

Alternative Scheme - Office + Office

Site Plan Alternative - Office + Office



E. CITY OF SOMERVILLE FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Please note:

This analysis was completed by the City of Somerville's Assessors Office, based upon assumptions and models available to the City, in an effort to compare projects through establishing value and taxes from a single methodology.

This information may differ from the fiscal impact estimates provided by the applicants.

		Somerville Community Corp (A)	Somerville Community Corp (B)	Powder house Dev Group	Diamond Sinacori	Tufts University (A)	Tufts University (B)	Davis Square Partners (A)	Davis Square Partners (B)	Mammoth Acquisition Co. LLC
Purchase Price		\$1,785,000	\$1,785,000	\$4,200,000	\$1,015,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,650,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$7,000,000
Proposer's Net Fiscal	Best	\$71,789		\$207,028	\$36,286	\$406,604		\$209,000	\$244,000	
	Worst				-\$189,542	\$345,584				
Assessed Values										
Assessments (City)		\$9,285,000	\$9,715,909	\$21,375,000	\$21,000,000	\$13,455,000	\$12,090,000	\$18,000,000	\$18,300,000	\$8,955,000
Proposer's Assessments		\$7,028,500	\$5,755,000	\$11,701,043	\$18,035,300	\$21,312,400	\$21,312,400	\$17,325,000	\$23,100,000	NO INFO
Difference		\$2,256,500	\$3,960,909	\$9,673,957	\$2,964,700	-\$7,857,400	-\$9,222,400	\$675,000	-\$4,800,000	
Fiscal Impacts										
Tax Revenues (City)		\$154,173	\$130,388	\$286,853	\$215,320	\$247,497	\$270,574	\$184,560	\$169,586	\$146,787
Municipal Expenses (City)		\$194,043	\$197,773	\$435,101	\$138,441	\$276,890	\$224,075	\$118,664	\$158,218	\$188,483
Net Fiscal Impact		-\$39,870	-\$67,386	-\$148,248	\$76,879	-\$29,392	\$46,499	\$65,896	\$11,368	-\$41,695